

from talking does not necessarily prevent them from feeling and wishing. To whip or scold them severely *may* do serious harm, and cannot do more good than to make the child hide his impulses and phantasies from grown-ups, even when, it succeeds in doing this. Several of the children quoted here were scolded or whipped at home for rude remarks, but how little this treatment helped is seen by the way their phantasies broke out again into open expression on the first opportunity.

On the whole, it is probably true (as I shall amplify later) that the natural reaction of the more understanding and sympathetic parent towards such behaviour in children is sound. "It's better not to do those things—come and do these other things instead." Mild, sensible handling, that does not make the child feel himself to be a monster or an outcast, but nevertheless holds up firm standards of restraint and consideration for others, will carry most children safely through this early and most difficult phase of emotional development, as the methods of any good nursery school show.

If one could win parents generally to realise that occasional or mild masturbation, for example, or other open expression of sexuality, is a common happening belonging to a normal phase of development, and one best dealt with indirectly, then the real danger of too harsh treatment might be avoided. But, on the other hand, if one could get it widely understood that where masturbation is continuous or persistent, the child is in urgent need of skilled therapeutic help, *not* whippings or leg splints, then a great deal of serious mental disturbance in later life might be happily forestalled.

It would be an advantage, too, if parents and nurses had the general knowledge that the tempers and tantrums, the defiance and stubbornness, the phobias and night-terrors,

the idiosyncrasies about food and difficulties as to training in cleanliness, which are liable to arise at any time in any ordinary nursery or nursery school, are themselves mainly the outcome of deep-seated mental conflict connected with the sexual life. It would be a great help to many parents if they understood that in minor degrees such difficulties *are* common and normal, and that the child will probably grow out of them with sensible handling; but that where they are specially severe or prolonged, the help of a psycho-analyst should be sought.